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"Celebrating our 47th year" 1952-1998

Volume 47, No. 9 ISSUE 560 **JANUARY 1999**

KEEP THE FEAST ... IN A HOLY WAY

For the past two months, the focus of much of everyday American society has been the sights and sounds of the holiday season. Santa Claus and Christmas trees, gift shopping and party planning, and songs from "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" to "White Christmas" have been among the highlights of this special time of the year. But we Orthodox Christians know that ***none*** of this reflects the real meaning of what is actually being celebrated.

The simple truth is that Christmas is the re-living of the Birth of a tiny Baby. And just not an ordinary baby. The feast of the Nativity commemorates the gratest announcement of all time: *"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord."* (Luke 2:11). A singular event, one that changed history, one that divided time, one that made possible the salvation of all mankind. Christmas is the coming to earth of the Son of God in human flesh.

So, how ought we to celebrate this day, if not the way of the world? The answer lies in the pages of the Scripture, where we find what those individuals who were present did to welcome the Infant Messiah into our world. The angels came from heaven, and they offered glorious hymns of praise to the Only-Begotten Son of God. The shepherds abandoned their flocks, to kneel in wonder and worship the New-Born Saviour. The Magi left their kingdoms, and offered the finest of their treasure to the King of Kings. Joseph relinquished his doubts and fears, and committed himself to faith in the Son of Man. And the Virgin, experiencing the most intimate union possible, gave her whole life in service of "Immanuel."

Christmas, then, must be so much more than holly and tinsel, parties and presents, and songs of good cheer. We must truly imitate and emulate the persons we read about in the Gospel accounts of the Nativity. Like the angels, we must offer Christ true hymns of praise that honor His

(Continued on Page 51, Col. 1)

A WAY TO A HAPPY NEW YEAR

To leave the old with a burst of song, to recall the right and forgive the wrong; to forget the thing that binds you fast to the vain regrets of the year that's past; to have the strength to let go your hold of the not worthwhile of the days grown old, to dare go forth with a purpose true, to the unknown task of the year that's new; to help your brother along the road to do his work and lift his load; to add your gift to the world's good cheer is to have and to give a Happy New Year.

A SLAVE TO ALL

On the Eve of Theophany our eyes are directed towards one of the major players in the dramatic Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan – to Saint John, the baptizer. We hear his strong and prophetic words, demanding that people turn away from the vanity of sin towards God and that they "bear fruits that befit repentance."

We find a parallel theme in the Epistle 1 Cor 9:19-27 as well. St. Paul speaks of the discipline required of one who hears the call of God and who decides to follow Him. He speaks of a paradoxical liberty. Paul is free but he **freely** decides to make himself "a slave to all." He highlights an important aspect of the life in Christ – service to God which is expressed as service to others.

One cannot say that one loves someone if one does nothing to help that person – to make his or her life in this world better in some way. If we love God, having discovered how much **He loves us,** we must offer Him our devoted service. This service is manifested by the things we do for others – by the way we live, speak, act and think.

Today we are invited to enter once more into the waters of Baptism with Jesus. We are invited to immerse ourselves in love – to love Him by choosing freely to be slaves to Him and to others. Such a choice cannot be taken lightly. But we shall do it if we are truly touched by His love, His humility, His sacrifice freely made for us. Glory to Him forever!

Very Rev'd Ihor Kutash, Ph.D.

HOLY WATER

On Theophany, January 6/19, the day of the Lord's Baptism, every year a great miracle is performed. The Holy Spirit, coming down upon the water, changes its natural properties. It becomes incorrupt, that is, it does not spoil, remains transparent and fresh for years, receives the grace to heal illnesses, to drive away demons and every evil power, to preserve people and their dwellings from every danger, to sanctify various objects whether for church or home use. Therefore, Orthodox Christians with reverence drink Holy Water – a great Agiasma (Holy thing) as the Greek people call it.

One should always have at home enough Theophany water so that it will last the whole year, and make use of it at every need: in case of illness, leaving on a journey, whenever one is upset, students when going to examinations. They do well who daily – before eating any kind of food – drink a little Holy Water. It strengthens the powers of our soul – if it is done, of course, with prayer and reverence, and one does not merely expect from it a mechanical result.

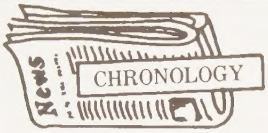
Every priest should take care to bless a sufficient quantity of water for his church, so that it will be on hand for the course of the whole year for every need and to be given out to those who ask for it; and parishioners should provide themselves at Theophany with Holy Water for the whole year and even so that it can be kept for future years.

St. John (Shanghai)

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The first representation of Christ on the Cross can be traced to a Syriac manuscript of 586 AD showing Him in a purple tunic reaching to the ankles. This representation became so standard that there arose riots in France at the first attempts to introduce the figure of the Lord unclothed.

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JANUARY 1999

DIED: Fr. Nicholas Fedorchak (retired) of Monongahela, PA. Matushka Alexandra Voshchullo in N. Mexico, previously of Salem, MA. Pani Arlene Dolhy of Scranton, PA.

A RIFT OCCURRED IN THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH about the time freedom came to the country in 1990. A Pan-Orthodox Convention, attended my most of the heads of the world's Orthodox churches, helped to normalize matters.

A COMMON DATE FOR EASTER was discussed at Aleppo, Syria. Both Eastern and Western Church celebrate the same day in 2001. The proposal was made to follow the rule made at the 1st Ecumenical Council in 325. The Orthodox and some Eastern Churches follow this rule at the present time.

THOSE VISITING UKRAINE may note minstrels playing a guitar or other string instrument and singing a plaintive song. These minstrels are blind mendicants. They were organized into professional guilds that set the standards of performance and provided them with protection and support. They were repressed under Stalin and in 1939 were subjected to a massacre for singing epic songs. Secrecy surrounds the guild's rites and membership. These blind singers are called kobzari.

ORTHODOX FROM SOUTH AMERICA met in Buenos Aires for a symposium. In Argentina, the Orthodox communities are made up of Russian, Ukrainian, Greek, Arab immigrants and descendents and native Argentinians. In Chile, there are thousands of Palestinians and their descendents and native Chileans. In Brazil, and Venezuela, many nationalities are represented.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR CATHEDRAL in central Moscow is expected to slow down or stop completely. Plans to complete it by 2000 will not be met. People cannot give much because they are so much in want; corporate and state funds are also in jeopardy. Lately, a gold plated cross measuring 30 by 20 feet was put on the main dome. An icon of St. Nicholas, donated by Italian Christians from Bari, Italy has been placed in the church. It is a copy of a miraculous icon lost long ago. The new icon comes from the Italian church in which the relics of St. Nicholas have been enshrined for hundreds of years since the Crusades.

THE RELICS OF ST. ALEXANDER OF SVIR were recently found uncatalogued in the Medical Academy. Several months of research by an Orthodox nun, Mother Leonida Safonova, a biologist. The finding of the relics received much attention in the U.S., some unfavorable. St. Alexander was born in 1448 and died in 1533. He is known as the "Russian Abraham" because he had a vision of the Holy Trinity. Three angels appeared to him and indicated a place by the Svirha River, where he was to found a monastery. He was canonized in 1641 and his relics remained at Svir until 1919 when they were confiscated by the Bolsheviks. The monastery has only 7 monks at present and is in ruins from pilfering and neglect.

A BOOK ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION has been ordered destroyed in the U.S. by the Vatican. All 1,300 copies of "Women at the Altar" by a Loreto nun, Sister Lavinia Byrne, have been sent to a recycling plant.

THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY has dismissed the Board of Trustees of the Theological School in Halki. The seminary has been closed since 1971 in violation of international law. The school was used to train clergy for Orthodox leadership. Secretary Albright has been informed of this by Senator Sarbanes.

Gift Suggestions

IF YOU LIVE A DISTANCE FROM A CHURCH or cannot attend, you will find three books compiled by the Orthodox Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary especially interesting. Great Vespers ($2.50) The Lives of the 70 Apostles ($6.00), and Hours of Prayer ($12.00), which contains many private prayers and acafists. Order from: The Orthodox Brotherhood, 5222 Front St., Jenners, PA 15546 or 814-629-9177.

VIDEOS OF ORTHODOX SERVICES MADE ESPECIALLY for Firebird, PO Box 303, Belleville, MI 48112-0303. Phone 313-699-0870. Write for catalogue for videos, audios and books about Orthodox faith, saints, services, and much more.

RUSSKY PALOMNIK (Russian Pilgrim) is a journal which is being sent to Russia. For 30 years before the Revolution it fed Russians with solid Christian writings designed to keep faith in Christ alive and active. Donations are needed to continue. Send to American Orthodox Mission to Russia, 1065 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94109. Make check payable to Valaam Society.

A TID BIT CALENDAR with sayings from Orthodox sources is available for $11.95 from Icons Plus, 27 W. Judson Ave., Youngstown, OH 44507. It may be used year after year. It stands on a table and you flip over a page every day.

A SPIRITUAL CLASSIC "Spiritual Combat," edited by Nicodemus and St. Theophan, has been updated by Fr. John Sparks and is available in 3 volumes: "Prayer in the Unseen Warfare", "Virtue in the Unseen Warfare", and "Victory in the Unseen Warfare." Each $9.95 from Conciliar Press, PO Box 76, Ben Lomond, CA 95005. Phone 1-800-967-7377.

RELIGIOUS BOOKS IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH plus icons, crosses, children's books are available from Shoppe St. Nicholas, 2001 N. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33311. Write or phone 954-566-6358.

AN APPOINTMENT size book with plastic spiral binding is available from The Orthodox Calendar Company, 3131 Scenic Court, Allison Park, PA 15101. The book has one day per page and includes the saint of the day, fasting information and an inspirational-wise saying. Call 412-487-8570.

•Keep the Feast...In a Holy Way

heavenly glory. Like the shepherds, we must give up our daily routines and come and worship in church the Saviour of our souls. Like the wise men of old, we must give from our treasure generous offerings that do justice to the Lord's ministry on earth. As it was for Joseph, our faith must not be simply an assent of belief but a life of commitment. And like the Theotokos, we must have the most intimate relationship possible with the Son of God ... for us, in Holy Communion ... and then live not just Christmas Day but indeed the rest of our life, serving in every way we can ... the One Who is *"God with us."*

As we celebrate the Nativity, let us heed the words of St. Gregory the Theologian: *"Let us keep the Feast, not popularly, but* ***in a holy way;*** *not as worldly people, but as in a Heavenly way; not as our celebration, but as* ***His,*** *Our Lord's! He has come not to bring sickness, but to bring healing; not through the birth, but through the new birth!"*

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

–Protopresbyter Michael G. Dahulich, Ph.D.

WINTER'S GRACE

Every believer, no matter how strong and determined, no matter what age, passes through moments in which moral religious faith is challenged. It may arise from emotional pain and tragedy, or from deep doubt about how capable we are of ever really knowing the truth.

We may also be challenged by another's failure. When a loved and respected religious leader shows himself to be far from perfect, his followers may experience a crisis in their own faith. Closer to home, perhaps, a friend we respect disappointed us.

In moments of doubt, whatever their source, the best thing to do is to accept these doubts as a challenge and an invitation to grow. See them as an invitation to find new meaning and a deeper understanding of your faith and of yourselves. It takes effort. It may even be uncomfortable. But in the end, facing the challenge is the healthiest approach.

When we feel weak and insecure about our doubts, it helps us to remember that Jesus was always ready to debate with the scholars and religious experts of His time. He openly invited their questions and their criticisms, and these debates were public. It is interesting to note that Jesus did not always convince the crowd of His position. In the reading from St. John 8:31-32 taken after a debate when He said: "to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'" Jesus was forced to hide and run from the temple because the crowd was threatening to stone Him.

Our faith is not a matter of how well we convince others of what we believe, but our own resolve to find the truth. This search seldom proceeds easily. We often have to backtrack and rethink our view of ourselves and the world. We must always be willing to admit that we might be mistaken.

Being open to correction and to further examination is not a sign of weakness or lack of faith. Quite the opposite, it confirms your faith that the truth can and will be known, in spite of your short-sightedness and ignorance. Be open to criticism and challenge because that's the way error – yours or that of another – can be exposed and corrected.

Jesus promises that you shall know the truth. Moments of doubt and uncertainty are evidence that the process of finding the truth and learning more about yourself and God is ongoing. There is always more to learn no matter what your age. When you doubt, it is a signal that you are about to discover something new about yourself and what you believe.

Welcome the challenge and feel the excitement of anticipating what the world will show you next.

PRESS FUND I

This month we have two Press Funds – last month's and this month's. Thank you all/Spasebo to Helen Lesko, Irene Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kulick, Anonymous, Mary Kochmaruk, Elizabeth Patnychuk, Veronica Pirow, RN, Joseph Plefka, John R. Barna, Anna Dorozynski, George Brozina, Fr. Michael Sopoliga, Joseph Devonchik, Andrew Fedetz, Marian Glovinsky, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kulenic, Helen Sadow, Nicholas Komernicky, Doris Koveal, Steve Pelak, Helen Cudlic, Ed Scarpari, Dr. Michael Taptykoff, Robert Tarnosky, Barbara Rhenish, Ethel Watlock, Kathleen Kopach, MD, Joe, Diana, Anastasia and Mikial Burchick. Rosemary Hill – Happy Thanksgiving wishes. Gloria Wheeler in memory of Baba Mary Durkot and parents Walter and Veronica Durkot Blake. Frank Pelak in memory of his wife Helen, parents Phillip and Anna and sister Eva Replyuk. Matushka Chromiak in memory of her husband Fr. John Chromiak, who died on Oct. 31, 1998.

PRESS FUND II

Thank you/Spasebo for helping us keep publishing. Susan Felch, Steve, Gloria and grandson Matthew Pasko, **Anne Dorozynski,** Thomas Broslawik, Dorothy Daley, Mary Olariu, Irene Allen, Mary Kochmaruk, John Russian, Mildred Zablotsky, Cyril Wadzita, Helen Dzugan, Alexandra Spanovick, Helen Cudlic, Alexis Penkoff, Ethel Watlock, Sheila Hrapchak, Mary Christini, Julia Stefanick, Dee Baumgarten, Julia Bockhaus, Eugene Slutyak, **Steve Pelak,** Comm. Joseph Devonchik, L.H. Dechio, Marlo Orlovich, William Soltis.

Thomas Broslawik for health of cousin George. William Holak in memory of Timoschuk and Holak Families. **Alex Sturmer** in memory of parents Father Roman and Matushka Xenia Sturmer. John and Dorothy Koropchak in memory of Pelak and Koropchak Families. **Harry and Anne Holak** in memory of John, Anna, George Kozey and Daniel, Anna and Emily Holak. **Steve and Lenora** Evancho for health of Fr. Basil and Matushka Nina Stroyen and Claudia Sulin and eternal memory for Dr. Joseph Repasky (40 days) and Deacon Paul Yova (1 year).

YOUR NAME

Unable to say "brother," a child names his newborn sibling "Bubba" and it sticks. A mother calls her daughter "Pokey" because she is slow drinking her bottle – and it stays. A dad likes the way his son swings a bat and he becomes "Slugger" from then on. Older parents start calling each other "Mom" and "Dad" or "Grandma" and Grand Gramps" or "Stara" and "Staree" or "Baba" and "Gedo."

Nicknames can be signs of affection "Cutie," but they can also be insults "Fatso."

Listen to what you and members of your family call one another and others in your life. Does your son call his sister "Stupid"? What do you call your wife? Your husband? When was the last time you called your spouse "Honey" or "Darling"?

What names do you call people behind their backs? Is your boss "The Hulk"? Do your children refer to their teachers as "Meanie" or "Old Boy"?

The names we use for others tells us a great deal about our relationships with them.

The world is becoming more informal and what we call people has been affected. Many of us can remember when older women were called "Aunt" or "Mrs."; older men were called "Uncle" or "Mr." The priest was addressed as "Batuishka" or "Father"; his wife as "Matushka." Teachers were addressed as "Miss" or "Mr." not by their given names.

Thought: "Lord, from our early years we are taught not to misuse Your name. In the same way, may we treat one another's name with respect."

NEW SERIES

This month we start The Symbol of Faith Series prepared by Raymond Mastroberte. The series is based on the 12 Articles of Faith as defined in the Nicean-Constantinoplitan Creed, which is proclaimed during each Divine Liturgy and many other services in the Orthodox Church. It is also included in the daily prayers. There is a weekly meditation for each of the 12 articles.

Jan. 3 – I believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

O Almighty Lord, You created all things in wisdom. The vastness of the heavens reveal Your infinite and boundless nature. As we behold the beauty of this good earth, which You fashioned with Your own hands, we have come to acknowledge that You are the very Source and Purpose for life. You see all things with Your all-encompassing Eye, and our hidden thoughts are not even hid from You. Grant us an increase in faith and spiritual understanding. May all people come to know You and the awesomeness of Your power. O heavenly Father, hear the prayerful voices of your children, and have mercy on us.

Jan. 10 – And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, born of the Father before all ages. Light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made.

O Jesus, only-begotten Son of God, You are inseparable from the Father in Your divinity. You are timeless and infinite and the Word through Whom the world and all that is within it was made. You are the Light of the world Who made light shine out of darkness. You confirmed Your divinity when you said in the Scriptures, "If you see Me, you see the Father." On this day, help us to confess and proclaim that You are Christ, the Son of the Living God. Fill us with the grace to acknowledge You before all people. You are one of the Holy Trinity and glorified together with the Father and the Holy spirit, therefore, look upon the petition of Your people, and have mercy on us.

Jan. 17 – Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.

The prophets proclaimed Your coming, O Lord and Savior, of Your birth and incarnation from the all-pure Virgin. We confess that You have come in the flesh, for the redemption of the human race. You descended from on high and took on the form of a servant to redeem us from the tyranny of the devil and unite us to the Father. You were like us in every way, O Lord, with the sole exception of sin. All creation exalts in Your birth, and the choirs of angels and archangels, the cherubim and the seraphim sing to You in endless praise. Bless all those who bring the Good News of Your plan of salvation to our world. Grant them strength and the peace that comes from knowing You, our only true God. O merciful One, receive the supplications of those who are praying to You in humility of heart and have mercy on us.

Jan. 24 – He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried.

O Christ, You are our King, beside You we recognize no other. When You stood silently before Pilate, You bore within You all the sins of the world, past, present and to come. When You voluntarily took upon Your shoulders the heavy yoke of the Cross, our transgressions accompanied You to Golgotha. Put to death in us all soul destroying passions. Cleanse our thoughts and minds. Teach us to do Your will in all things and times. You are the One Who gives strength in time of need, so receive the cries of Your unworthy servants, and have mercy on us.

Jan. 31 – On the third day He rose according to the Scriptures.

O Christ our true Passover, the prophets of old foretold of Your rising from the dead after Your passion, death and burial. When You descended into the realm of death, You made it powerless. When You arose from the dead on the third day, You granted life to the world. As Your holy Apostles helped proclaim to the world the life-giving Gospel, help us to do the same wherever we live, work or visit. You opened the Kingdom of heaven to all believers. O Wisdom, Word and Power of God, grant that we may more perfectly partake of You in the never-ending day of Your Kingdom, now, we ask you to have mercy on us.

* * * * * *

As the prudent vintager eats only ripe grapes and gathers not those which are green, so the eye of a wise man rests only upon the virtue in others; whereas the eye of the fool seeks only to discover in his neighbor vices and defects.

St. John Climacus

Dabs of Thoughts

Faith that goes on trusting even when there seems to be no reason for trust is, in the most literal sense, God's work and God's gift. God bestows this gift on all who ask for it. He may not do so in just the way we want, or at the time we expect. Being willing to leave the manner and time of this gift to God the giver is itself part of faith, a test of our sincerity in asking for faith.

All who have authority should pay less attention to all the power of position than to their own equality of nature with their subjects. Their joy should not be so much to rule people as to help them. They should bear in mind that our fathers of old were not kings of people, but shepherds of flocks.

St. Gregory the Great

Dialogue involves communication that digs below the surface into the values, dreams, feelings of others involved. It requires intense listening to the meaning behind the words.

The Book of Revelation was admitted to the Canon of the New Testament on the condition that it never be read from during public worship. It was the Church which decided which documents, out of the many written, were to be included in the New Testament.

The concept of a Sabbatical comes from Exodus 23:11, which teaches that every seventh year should be observed as a year of rest.

Not working on the Sabbath (Exodus 23:12) and using this day as a day of corporate worship to commemorate God's goodness (Ex 20:11; Deut 5:15) teaches us not to work on Sunday and to worship God in the Church.

The ancient creeds like the Nicene Creed, which we proclaim at each Divine Liturgy, were prepared to defend the basic doctrines of Christianity when heresies invaded the church.

It isn't difficult to make a mountain out of a molehill – just add a little dirt.

Scholars do not grow up in a night like mushrooms. "Getting through" and "getting an education" are not quite synonymous.

We know a liberal donor who always insists on anonymity to the extent that he gives his donation in a form of an unsigned check.



EDITORS' NOTES

We bring your attention to the change in our phone's area code. We are no longer in 717. **Our new area code is 570.**

Many parishes are making Super Bowl Sunday into Souper Bowl Sunday. A soup kettle is either put in the entrance of the church or someone holds it at the end of the service and a donation of $1 or some cans of soup can be put into the kettle. The donations are given to the local soup kitchen.

Remember that your house should be blessed each year. **Don't refuse a blessing!**

Most of us view the Christmas and Theophany stories as a unit. In the same breath we tell of the Birth of the Child, the appearance of the Star, the journey of the Wisemen and the Baptism of Christ. If we give it some thought, we will realize that it took some time for these events to unfold.

The story is being told again: that precious, yet powerful, story of how a gentle baby in a manger became the King of Eternity and was recognized by God as His beloved Son. These events told in a page or two in the Bible are probably the most powerful stories ever told.

But the stories are not being told so that we can be sentimental about them – though most of us might want and do leave it there.

The Christmas and Epiphany story is only the beginning of what God has to say to us. He also wants us to love Him, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The Kingdom that God offers us is much more than a place we hope to go to when we die. The Kingdom that God offers us is the Kingdom of which we are now a part. It is the kind of Kingdom that exists whenever we gather in His Name – and it is a Kingdom, not because we are there, but because He is there.

The Stroyens

* * * * * *

If sorrow makes us shed tears, faith in the promises of God makes us dry them.

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Marea,

Yak tam kolo vas? Toot shitko going OK. No yah mala takee experience. Yah dumala zhe yah scrazuyu. Tak Peeshlo.

A bunch of us dumalee zeh it would be very nice to go kolyadovatee. We decided to get the old costumes out of attics in the church and get dressed up yak kolee bullo. Mr. dostalee costumes, poh cleanovalee and did repairachki. Me got dressed nah Rustvo and me peeshlee spevatee kolyadee.

Me malee takee fun. In each house ohne nas hostilee ee me went from house to house until preshlo dark. One of our parifionee z'mofovalee doh novee house nah suburbs and we tried to find it. Me hladalee ee hladalee. Soon we saw a police car coming. We became takee silly boh we were getting kindah cold ee wet. Me dumam ohn pomozhe nam for sure. Ohn preshol doh nas eeh asked: "What you doing?" Me telling him zhe we looking for The Zamlansky house. Ohn asked: "What's the number and street?" Me neh znalee for sure boh Zamlansky nam gave directions ot causewaya. Policeman became suspicious eeh calloval police station eh druhee police car ee vans preshlee ee nas za bralee don lakopl-headquaters.

Ohnee nas asked za nashee ID's. Me neh malee boh me leaveovalee yu churchhall kolee me changovalee doh costumes. Then ohnee asked what we were celebrating Mardi Gras or Halloween. Then ohne povili nam zhe ohne budyut holding us for public nuisance. We were a little loud, giggly and rowdy ot fundavanya.

Suddenly, we decided – call our priest – he'll vouch for us! Me calovalee Fadera a ohn neh bull doma! To make matters worse some of our singers got sick from too much stress and too much hospitality!

Anyhow, finally everything got straightened out. Me spevalee kolyadee nah police station ee ohne collectovalee donation nah church. Me neh zabudem tot Christmas.

Thank you zah picture of your kolyadnekee. Yah Brala picture of nas in our costumes ee yah poshlyou van next time.

Budte Zdrove
Spevanka Hanya.

SEVERAL NAMES

The historical event of the Baptism of Christ by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River has many names. The event recorded in Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-22 is celebrated on January 6/19. It was to be found on the Church Calendar several hundred years before the Nativity of Christ (Christmas) was to be found there.

In the beginning the two days were celebrated as one as they commemorated events in the life of Christ. The names for this day come from these events. At His Nativity, He was manifested to a few people. At His Baptism, He was manifested to many people as it was a public event. At His Birth, He was known as Mary's Son.

At Christ's Baptism, His Father was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son." The identity of Jesus was made clear. This for the first time involved more than the person of Christ. It involved the very being of God Who was revealed as Trinity at the Baptism. God the Father's voice was heard, God the Son was in the water, God the Holy Spirit showed His presence in the form of a dove.

Epiphany, another name for the day, means revealing or manifestation. Theophany carries with it the added meaning of God being revealed.

Other names for the day are Yordan (Jordan) from the name of the River where the event took place and Illumination or Feast of Light because Christ has come to enlighten us. This is reflected in the Matin Service, which is designed to end at the dawning of a new day. Hymns of Light are sung and the priest comes forth to proclaim: "Glory to Thee, Who has shown us the Light."

By whatever name we look at this great event, it shines with brilliance of thought and meaning.

The day reminds us of our own Baptism. We reflect on the day our Godparents brought us for the first time to the Church, where we were spiritually born (Born again) into the Family of God. For us, our godparents promised to believe in Christ and serve Him. For us, they promised to renounce Satan and all his works. It was then that we were anointed as the chosen of God.

The Tropar for the day explains it all: "When You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, naming You His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove made good the certainty of His Word. O Christ, Our God, Who was manifested and has enlightened the world. Glory to You."

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You quickly lose interest in the church when you have nothing invested.



We enjoy talking to so many of you on the phone. We have so many "Phone Pals" we are truly blessed. I was talking to Barbara from Ohio and she told me that she enjoyed the cold months when she was young because the coal stove was kept burning and her mother seemed to make desserts – things they did not have the rest of the year. We talked about old times and old recipes and she was kind enough to send me one for noodle pudding, which she especially liked. Her mother made this with homemade "ryzanki" noodles; but we found that "store bought" were also good.

Barbara's Noodle Pudding

8 oz. medium noodles
4 eggs
1 tsp. grated lemon peel
3 Tbls. lemon juice
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups cottage cheese (cream style)
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup raisins

Cook noodles until still slightly firm, according to directions on package. Meanwhile, mix eggs, lemon peel and lemon juice and beat until foamy. Gradually beat in sugar and salt. Beat in cottage cheese and sour cream. Fold in cooked and drained noodles and raisins. Turn into ungreased 12x7 baking pan. Bake at 350° about 35 minutes or until knife inserted off center comes out clean. Cut in squares. May eat warm or cold plain or topped with whipped topping and nuts.

Variations: Use 1 tsp. vanilla instead of lemon juice and peel.

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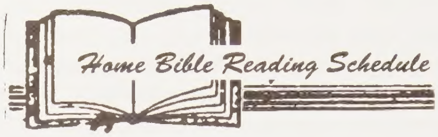
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JANUARY 1999

1	Col 2:8-12	16	1 Thess 5:14-23
2	1 Tim 3:14, 4-5	17	Heb 13:17-21
3	2 Tim 4:5-8	18	Heb 13:7-16
4	Heb 11:17-23, 27-31	19	1 Peter 3:10-22
		20	Heb 13:17-21
5	1 Cor 9:19-27	21	1 Peter 4:12, 5:5
6	Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7	22	2 Peter 1:1-10
7	Acts 19:1-8	23	2 Tim 2:11-19
8	James 2:1-13	24	1 Tim 4:9-15
9	Eph 6:10-17	25	1 Cor 12:7-11
10	Eph 4:7-13	26	1 Peter 3:10-22
11	James 2:14-26	27	1 Peter 4:1-11
12	James 3:1-10	28	1 Peter 4:12-5:5
13	James 3:11-4:6	29	2 Peter 1:1-10
14	Heb 7:26, 8:2	30	Heb 13:7-16
15	1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12	31	2 Tim 3:10-14

BIBLE STUDY

On the day before Epiphany we read from 1 Cor. 9:22. The book of 1 Corinthians is St. Paul's response to a letter from the church at Corinth (7:1). The members there had asked St. Paul several questions.

In 8:1 through 11:1, he answers two questions. The first is about eating meat sacrificed to idols, and the second is about his freedom and right to minister by being "all things to all men."

St. Paul not only defends his freedom to minister, but also advises the Corinthian members to follow his personal behavior as to the sacrificial meat.

Seeing St. Paul's comment: "I have become all things to all men," in this context helps us better understand the difficult saying and appreciate what he meant.

Corinth had more than 25 pagan temples or shrines, most being places for animal sacrifices. The meat from these sacrifices would either be cooked and served at the temple or sold in the local market.

Some Christian members in Corinth understood they could eat this sacrificial meat. In principe, St. Paul agreed.

However, some, most likely converts who recently had left their pagan lifestyle, believed that eating this meat implied worshiping pagan gods. St. Paul understood and was sensitive to their concerns.

St. Paul urged the members who understood it was permissible to eat such meat to take into account the concerns of their fellow members who believed it wasn't right (8:9-11).

To illustrate his point and to defend his authority, St. Paul gives an example of a time when he considered the concerns of the Corinthians.

He explains his right as an apostle to be paid for his work – a right he chose not to exercise (9:12). St. Paul did not want the members to think he was preaching the gospel for money (9:15-18).

He then drew an analogy. Just as he waived his right to receive pay not wanting to offend anyone, the Corinthian members should waive their right to eat meat sacrificed to idols, just in case it might offend other members.

In context, we see that St. Paul's statement, "I have become all things to all men" summarizes his concerned attitude toward people. St. Paul is not addressing morality nor obedience, and he certainly is not implying they are relative or subjective. Instead, he recognized that cultural and personality differences exist, and that to be effective Christians, he had to be sensitive to these differences. He willingly waived his rights so as not to offend or hurt other members of the Church.

St. Paul summarizes his answer: "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God. Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit of many, that they may be saved" (10:31-33).

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 1999

Most important days appear on the same day each year. Those which depend on the Easter/Pascha date differ each year. This year these dates include:

The beginning of Pre-Lent	January 31
Great Lent begins	February 22
Western Easter	April 4
Palm Sunday	April 4
Easter/Pascha	April 11
Ascension	May 20
Pentecost	May 30

FUNDS

ALASKA – A.M. Fedec, Joseph Plefka
BOTH MISSION AND ALASKA – Anonymous, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kulick, Ethel Watlock, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kulenic.

LIGHT MOMENT

A travel agent received a call from a woman inquiring about a package tour to Hawaii. After giving her the information, she felt it cost a bit more than she wanted to pay. She thought about it for a moment and asked: "Would it make it cheaper to fly to California and then take the train to Hawaii?"